

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2067

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN EAID MASS GR

SUBJECT: PAPALIGOURAS ON US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GREECE

1. IN THE COURSE OF MARCH 3 CALL ON COORDINATION MINISTER PAPALIGOURAS BY AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECY LAINGEN AND ECON/COMM COUNSELOR, PAPALIGOURAS EXPRESSED THE WARM APPRECIATION OF THE GOG FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS PROPOSED ECONOMIC/MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR GREECE AND FOR THE RECENTLY APPROVED \$45 MILLION CCC CREDIT. HE STATED THAT IN 1976 GREECE HAD TO SPEND \$532 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES, STRESSING THAT THIS WAS PURELY DEFENSIVE, THAT IT WOULD PRESERVE PEACE BY SERVING AS A DETERRENT TO TURKEY, AND THAT IT REPRESENTED IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS AN INCREMENT IN GREECES CAPABILITIES VIS-A-VIS THE ULTIMATE ENEMY, THE SOVIET BLOC.

2. UNDERSCORING AGAIN THE HEAVY BURDEN ON GREECE OF THESE OUTLAYS AND OF THE OIL SITUATION, PAPALIGOURAS SEES 1976 AND 1977 AS THE CRITICAL YEARS FOR GREECE'S
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BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. HE OBSERVED THAT THE RISING

EXPECTATIONS OF THE GREEK POPULATE FOLLOWING
THE END OF DICTATORSHIP IMPOSED HEAVY SOCIAL AND
BUDGETARY STRAINS, NOTING IN PARTICULAR CONTINUING
LABOR UNREST AND STRIKES. HE ALSO NOTED SOME RECENT
PROMISING NEW INVESTMENTS IN THE MINERALS SECTOR WHICH
WOULD ADD TO GREECES EXPORT CAPACITY. HE CONCLUDED
THAT THE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE BEING PROVIDED IN THIS
CRITICAL TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WAS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOLID DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
IN GREECE.
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